

2017

Front Matter, Editor's Note, Table of Contents

Editorial Staff

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What sparked the NJCTE logo? A NJCTE board member, Pat Schall, who was a professor at The College of St. Elizabeth, New Jersey, had a graduate student named MaryAnn St. Jacques, who taught private art lessons and is now an art teacher at Madison High School. While she was in Dr. Schall's classes, they got the idea that perhaps the art students could design and make a banner based on literacy. So the art students, ranging from second grade to fifth grade, designed a self-portrait based on their own literacy--reading, writing, speaking, and listening, focusing on what was important to them in literacy. St. Jacques had been teaching them about Picasso and the Cubists, and their self-portraits reflect that era in art but also sparked their own interpretations of that era and their reflections on their own literacy.

New Jersey English Journal

2017 Issue

New Jersey English Journal is a peer-reviewed publication of New Jersey Council of Teachers of English (NJCTE). This journal is intended to serve our members through the sharing and showcasing of research, best practices and ideas related to K-12 and college English Language Arts education.

Editor: Liz deBeer, Point Pleasant Beach High School (emerita),
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CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

2018 Issue of *New Jersey English Journal*:

New Jersey English Journal, a peer-reviewed publication of New Jersey Council of Teachers of English, invites you to share submissions on “Transformative Teaching in the 21st Century: Teachers as Catalysts.” We seek researched articles as well as 500-word personal essays and other creative responses that shed light on the many possibilities, topics, issues, problems and solutions related to transformative teaching in the 21st century at all grade levels from kindergarten to college. Articles should relate directly to English Language Arts teaching and learning. We value responses from both veteran and new teachers. Co-written articles are also welcome. Writers are urged to read past editions available online at www.njcte.com to review successful submissions. The editors expect thoughtful and carefully edited submissions.

We invite you to respond to the theme of “Transformative Teaching in the 21st Century: Teachers as Catalysts” by considering such questions as:

- * Teaching Language Arts in a Technological Age
- * Encouraging Critical Thinking & Creativity in an Assessment-Driven Environment
- * Creating Community & Encouraging Empathy in Language Arts Classrooms
- * Building Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions for Global Citizenship
- * Dispelling Myths about Education Today
- * Social Justice Pedagogy and Tackling Controversial Topics
- * Methods for Teaching beyond The Canon: Suggestions for 21st Century Texts and Strategies

In addition to submissions that respond to the theme, we also welcome poetry on the topic of teaching. Submissions will be accepted between April 1 and **December 15, 2017**. Submissions should not have been published in any other journal. Submissions must use MLA formatting and Garamond Font in Size 12. All submissions will be reviewed by multiple members of our editorial board. Submitters will receive a response by February 1, 2018; the journal will be released by April 1, 2018. Send queries and submissions to 2018 journal editor Liz deBeer at ldebeerwardell@gmail.com.

From the Editor

The theme of “Professional Growth: What’s Inspiring?” reminds me of a workshop I attended years ago at The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) entitled “If Teaching is Meant to Feel So Good, Why Do I Feel So Bad?” English teachers spend countless hours grading papers, writing lesson plans, responding to parents and administrators’ angst, and preparing for various tests. We are exhausted and often unfulfilled, yearning for validation and inspiration. And then we hear some public officials insult our profession, such as when New Jersey Governor Chris Christie called some New Jersey schools “Failure Factories.”

We teachers love learning and helping others learn. That’s why we joined the profession, after all, to share our commitment to education with others.

Sometimes, though, that huge pile of ungraded papers taunts us, and we wonder how we can find our passion again. Thankfully, the contributors to this issue offer myriad ways to feel better, to be inspired, to remember the words of Nelson Mandela: “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Some contributors like Edwin Romond and Rachelle M. Parker pay tribute to teachers who inspired them. Others like Christina N. Berchini and Eric Paragallo find inspiration in students who desperately need help. New technology inspires some writers like Lauren Heimlich Foley, who describe exploring twitter and digital portfolios. LeVar Harris and Jonathan Dimaio share how teaching in another country can be inspiring. Caroline Wilkinson, Audrey Fisch, Susan Chenelle, Roberta L. Tipton and Patricia Bender are all motivated by collaborating with peers.

As I have worked on this journal, I myself am inspired to hear these stories, to bear witness to others’ testimony. Nothing is a greater spark than feeling the heat from someone else’s passion in teaching.

The opposite is true too. Like Debbie Downer from *Saturday Night Live*, it is draining to listen to teachers (or anyone) regularly spew dismissive comments about the profession, each other and even students, especially when the words are without hope. No one wants to be judged on a comma splice. We need to help each other, not just in the big ways, but in the everyday moments, being more mindful of our comments and listening more openly.

I remember when one of my children had a teacher who would read aloud the worst paper submitted for each assignment. Years later, those students still remember both that teacher for humiliating them, as well as dreading English class. Conversely, if the teacher had read aloud the successful essays, the students would feel pride and perhaps be inspired to try new techniques.

I hope, like me, you find reading the poems, vignettes and articles in this issue inspiring. Teaching can often be a struggle, but it’s a noble one and it has, if we look closely, a community where we can find and give encouragement and strive to be the teacher to whom others pay tribute, like the one pictured by Rachelle M. Parker in her lovely poem “Mrs. Lang.”

A special thanks to all the editorial board, but especially the assistant editor Patricia Bender, whose input is invaluable to both the journal and my sanity. Also, much gratitude to Donna Jorgensen and Joe Pizzo for spreading word about this journal at the NCTE conferences. Thank you also to NJCTE President Susan Reese who meets the challenge of guiding us all. Finally, thank you to all the contributors and the readers, whose words, art, and reactions create this journal.